LAND REVENUE CODE BILL.

Mr. Rajaram Row.—Sir, The first item of business on the agenda which has been circulated by the Secretary is an application I have to make to the Council for permission to introduce a Bill which if passed into law will be known as the Revenue Code or more correctly the Land Revenue Code of Travancore. That the proper administration of the land revenue is one of the chief functions of the Governments in India is a matter which is well known, and the enactment of suitable rules and regulations for such administration is one of the most important duties of the Legislature. Although a regular system of legislation on modern lines was started so far back as 1010 of the Malabar era and 125 Regulations have been passed during the past 70 years, I find very few of those Regulations have a bearing on the Revenue administration of the country. True, we have Regulations for Revenue Recovery, about Boundary marks, Irrigation and a few minor matters but they deal with only a few of those subjects which a department of Land Revenue is called upon to administer every day. The legislation of the past 7 decades has been mostly devoted to civil and criminal matters, and to improving the laws regarding them so as to bring them in line with similar legislation elsewhere and I will not be wrong when I say that legislation on Land Revenue matters has not received that share of attention which it deserves. The result is that when important questions arise touching them, both the Revenue officers of the State and the people whose interests are involved have found it difficult to lay their hands on the exact rule or law which should govern the solution of such questions; and very often even the officer who possesses both the patience and the perseverance to plunge into the details of the working of the Revenue department finds himself wide at sea and turns aghast at the impossibility of the task he has assigned to himself. When I state all this let me not be understood as saying that the Revenue administration of the country has been and is being carried on quite arbitrarily and without the aid of any rules or regulations. Far from it; our ancestors were quite as wise as we are, nay very much wiser, and laid down very useful rules which met the requirements of their times. In the purely Hindu period of the country's government, we had Chattavariolas and Vilambarams followed by Hukumnamas in the next period when Mahomedan ideas and systems influenced the administration and lastly we have had the period of circulars, proceedings, Royal proclamations and notifications and all of these contain very excellent principles and very useful rules of procedure. But they are lying scattered and buried among a huge and useless mass of records and but for Mr. Krishna Row's very valuable Hand-book, we could not have had them in any connected form whatever; but it will be admitted that even his work is incomplete; and another objection raised against these old Hukumnamas and rules is that not being enacted in the form of Regulations to which the present generation is accustomed they cannot claim the same authority as these latter. The time has therefore arrived when this state of things should be remedied. All the scattered fragments of our revenue laws should be gathered together and built into one comprehensive Code. In the process of reconstruction we should have to embody in our Code such provisions of the most recent and advanced Revenue Regulations of other countries as are applicable to our circumstances and conditions, so as to make the rules of our Revenue administration both scientific and up to date. My ambition is to draw up a Bill which will help in attaining this object, and if the Council will give me the permission I seek, I will place on this table at the earliest opportunity possible such a Bill which after being touched up and put into proper shape by the combined wisdom of this Council may if approved by His Highness the Maha Rajah supply a great want and may I also hope become an important and valuable addition to our Statute book. I now formally ask leave to introduce this Bill.

Permission was granted accordingly.

PLANTERS LABOUR BILL.

Mr. Rajaram Row.—The next item of business is the consideration of the principle of the Planters Labour Bill. I assure the Council I will not take much of their time by unnecessarily lengthy remarks and shall deal with the subject as

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